

RECENT LITERATURE.

Macoun's 'Catalogue of Canadian Birds,' Part II.—The first part of this important work appeared in 1900, and its general character and scope were so fully indicated in this journal (Vol. XVII, Oct., 1900, pp. 394, 395), that it remains now only to chronicle the appearance and extent of Part II,¹ which includes the Raptores, and the succeeding families of the A. O. U. Check-List to and including the Icteridæ. As in Part I, we have a compendium of the previously published information regarding the range and breeding areas of the species known to occur in North America north of the United States, supplemented by a large amount of hitherto unpublished material gathered by the members of the Canadian Geological Survey, and contributions from a large number of trustworthy correspondents. The authority is given for each record, whether published or unpublished, thus explicitly designating the sources of the information here presented. In the case of published records, the place of publication is often, but not always, explicitly stated. The 'Catalogue' also includes a list of the specimens in the Government Museum at Ottawa, with full data as to their place and date of capture, etc.

It is announced that Part III, completing the work, is ready for the press, and that it will be published during the coming winter. It will include such information relating to species mentioned in Parts I and II as may have been received since their publication, as well as an index to the three parts, and a complete bibliography of the authorities consulted in the preparation of the work. The 'Catalogue' will thus be a work of great permanent value, and a most important contribution to our knowledge of the distribution of North American birds.—J. A. A.

Dresser's 'A Manual of Palæarctic Birds.'²—In a work of some 950 pages Mr. Dresser manages to treat the 1219 species and subspecies of the

¹ Geological Survey of Canada. | Robert Bell, M. D., Sc. D., (Cantab.), LL. D., F. R. S. | — | Catalogue | of | Canadian Birds. | — | Part II. | Birds of Prey, Woodpeckers, Fly-catchers, | Crows, Jays and Blackbirds. | Including the following orders: | Raptores, Coccyges, Pici, Macrochires, and Part | of the Passeres, | — | By | John Macoun, M. A., F. R. S. C., | Naturalist to the Geological Survey of Canada. | [Vignette.] Ottawa: | Printed by S. E. Dawson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, | 1903.—8vo, pp. i-iv, + 11., pp. 219-413. Price, 10 cents.

² A Manual of | Palæarctic Birds | By H. E. Dresser, F. L. S., F. Z. S., etc. | Author of "The Birds of Europe" | [Vignette] London | Published by the Author at 3 Hanover Square, W.—8vo. Part I, 1902, pp. 1-498, and frontispiece; Part II, 1903, pp. i-vii, 499-922, 811. unpagged, and frontispiece. Price, 25 s. net; thin paper copies, 30 s. net.

Palæarctic ornith. as here recognized. As stated in the preface, the work is "primarily intended for the use of field-naturalists and travellers." With their convenience in mind, the technicalities, including synonymy and references, have been reduced to small compass, and binomials are employed throughout, even for the forms included as "subspecies." All forms "described under trinomials" have been uniformly excluded as not entitled to any kind of recognition, for the reasons, first, that the author is "in principle a binomialist," and, second, because their recognition is difficult for even experts, and their admission "seems calculated rather to puzzle and discourage than to assist the beginner." For this and other reasons the 'Manual' can hardly be considered as a technical treatise, but as a popular handbook for the identification of the species and the more prominent "subspecies." The nomenclature is orthodox from the standpoint of ultra conservatism, through the non-recognition of Linnaean names proposed prior to 1766, in the rejection of specific names that have been adopted for genera, and in the use of emended forms of names instead of the original. To save space in the bibliographical citations, apparently, the name adopted in the text heads the list of references, regardless of whether the generic element of the name was used for the species by the authors cited or not; but when not so used the name of the author is enclosed in parenthesis, though there appears to be no explanation to this effect. It also seems a little strange to find a species ranged as a subspecies of some other species described many years later, as in the case of *Cinclus aquaticus*, with parallel cases elsewhere.

In the treatment of the species the English name is given first, then the systematic name, followed by references to the principal works treating of the species (or subspecies, as the case may be); then are given its vernacular names in the various countries it inhabits, followed by a short description (generally sufficient, apparently, for identification), a brief statement of its range, and a paragraph or two regarding its habits, including some account of the nest and eggs, the whole occupying about a page. Subspecies are formally distinguished as such by the prefix "subsp." and by use of different type for the name; they are usually disposed of, very properly, in a few lines, by comparison with the species to which they are most allied. The species follow each other in the systematic order of the same author's 'Birds of Europe,' but there are no divisions higher than genera to indicate the limits of families and orders — a feature that might well have been supplied in the interest of the non-scientific reader. The work, however, cannot fail to be of the greatest service to the class of users for which it is avowedly prepared, and also a handy reference book for ornithologists. Indeed, the author is entitled to great credit for having placed before the public such a concise and excellent manual of the birds of so vast an area as the Palæarctic Region. — J. A. A.